

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:**

Kelly Hagen, Communications Director  
North Dakota United  
701-471-7690

[kelly.hagen@ndunited.org](mailto:kelly.hagen@ndunited.org)

**Release Date:**

Immediately



### **As Vote Looms, State-Conducted Survey of Public Employees Shows Strong Opposition to Closing Defined-Benefit Retirement Plan**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The results of the most recent survey conducted by the State of North Dakota’s Human Resource Management Services (HRMS) Division show strong employee opposition to proposed changes, as the North Dakota Legislature’s Interim Retirement Committee prepares to take a vote on the future of the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS) defined-benefit retirement plan.

In a 2022 Total Rewards Survey, state workers were given a series of statements about the compensation and benefits they receive as employees and asked to rank how much they agreed with each statement on a scale of 1 to 5.

- Out of 3,858 responses to the statement “I prefer to have a Defined Benefit (DB) Retirement Plan rather than a Defined Contribution (DC) Retirement Plan,” **42 percent rated it as 5, or Strongly Agree.**
- Of the 3,840 who ranked how much they agreed with the statement “I prefer to have a defined contribution (DC) retirement plan rather than a defined benefit (DB) retirement plan,” the rate of 5 – Strongly Agree responses **plummets to only 3 percent.**

“Millennials like me have faced a historically unstable job market, so I value the security my pension provides. To attract and keep good public employees, legislators should improve our benefits, not chip away at them,” said Dana Henry, a compliance officer with the Office of the State Tax Commissioner.

“For many years, the defined-benefit retirement plan managed by NDPERS has served to provide a modest and dependable retirement for those North Dakotans who have worked tirelessly to provide the vital public services that North Dakotans expect and deserve,” said North Dakota United President Nick Archuleta. “Public employees have historically been paid 8 to 12 percent less than their similarly trained and experienced counterparts in the private sector. The PERS defined-benefit retirement plan serves as a tool to recruit and retain highly qualified and talented public employees. States that have closed their DB retirement plans, like West Virginia and Alaska, are either planning to reopen those plans or have already done so. North Dakota should head the lessons learned in those states and put the DB plan on a course to be fully funded; something it could have done in each of the last six legislative sessions. The longer we wait, the more expensive doing so becomes.”

*North Dakota United is the largest professional union of public educators and employees in the state, representing more than 11,000 educators and public employees.*

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**301 N. Fourth St., Bismarck, ND 58501**

**Phone: 701-223-0450**

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